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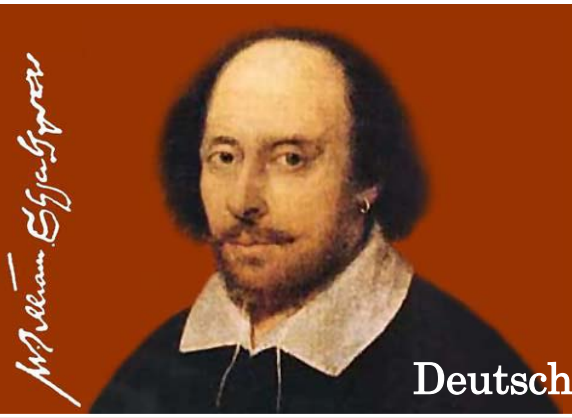

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Money Matters: Shakespeare's Finances

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CHRISTINA WALD AND FELIX SPRANG

Money Matters: Shakespeare's Finances

"Put money in thy purse," Iago keeps reminding Roderigo throughout the play *Othello* but we never actually learn why Iago presses Roderigo for money. Iago is not a spendthrift, he does not follow expensive fashions, and he is certainly not a generous husband. What matters is that as creditor Iago is in control of Roderigo: Iago's demands create a vacuum that arguably sets Iago's plot and the whole play in motion. Money matters are central to the plot of *Othello,* but they are at the same time peculiarly obscure.

Financial transactions, the exchange of goods, credit and debt, possession, profit and loss all feature prominently in the plays (and poems) of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Even Karl Marx was impressed by how accurate Shakespeare portrayed the real nature of money as 'visible divinity' that is capable of 'the universal confounding and distorting of things' and should be regarded as the 'common whore' and 'common procurer of people and nations.' Essentially, Elizabethan England was an economy of obligation due to the chronic shortage of ready money. As coins were devaluated, Shakespeare's London saw a credit crunch not unlike the financial crisis we experience today. It is thus hardly surprising that our pecuniary concerns are also central concerns in the plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

This issue explores the link between money matters on stage and the role that money plays in society at large. The essays included in this volume address how Shakespeare's plays envision the economic, social, and psychic repercussions of financial transactions and how they reflect the beginnings of capitalism. Johann Gregory explores the theatrical symbolism of Portia, Cressida and Cordelia and argues that Shakespeare's characterisation of these three women foregrounds issues of theatrical value and currency. Anne Enderwitz argues that Timon's practice of gift-giving, which is based on need rather than reciprocity, can be read as a critique of an emerging credit culture. Galena Hashhozheva compares the structure and plot of *Timon of Athens* with Spenser's Mammon canto in the *The Faerie Queene* (II.vii) to discuss Timon's and Guyon's self-imposed starvation as acts of defiance, as 'anorexic manifestos' that repudiate a coercive system of uniformity and universal equivalence based on gold.

"[THEATRE], THY NAME IS WOMAN": THEATRICAL VALUE AND POWER IN SHAKESPEARE

JOHANN GREGORY*

Introduction

Thinking on the theme of the three caskets in *The Merchant of Venice*, Freud suggested that "[i]f what we were concerned with were a dream, it would occur to us at once that caskets were also women, symbols of the essential in woman, and therefore of a woman herself" (110-111). Quoting this passage, Pierre Bourdieu noticed how in Gustave Flaubert's *A Sentimental Education* a silver casket is transferred between three women: in the novel, he argues, the significance of the casket "involves a homologous social scheme as well, to wit, the opposition between art and money" (Bourdieu 24: Flaubert). According to Bourdieu, the three women come to be associated with different artistic fields. Thus, Mme Arnoux might represent high art, while "mercenary art, […] represented by bourgeois theatre [is] associated with the figure of Mme Dambreuse, and minor mercenary art, represented by vaudeville, cabaret or the serial novel, [is] evoked by Rosanette" (24). Flaubert's novel invites its readers to reflect on artistic fields and cultural production, partly through the characterization of these three women. Shakespeare's work can also be seen in a similar light, and a comparable technique seems to be noticeable in the description of some of the women in the plays and especially when they speak.

This essay briefly explores the theatrical symbolism of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida* and Cordelia in *King Lear*. It argues that Shakespeare's characterisation of these three women can be seen to foreground issues of theatrical value and currency: Portia's characterisation invites the audience to reflect on the power of a (financed) theatre; the characterisation of Cressida negotiates the social and economic proximity of the theatre and the brothel; and, in Cordelia, *King Lear* seems to bewail the apparent failure of theatre to communicate its value. The essay thus responds to critical thinking on the making of theatrical value, the staging of performance, and the question of Shakespeare's own artistic autonomy.

This essay does not seek to provide a feminist *riposte* to Hamlet's aphorism on women, as the essay's title might have signalled, but will explore the characterisation of several women in the plays in relation to money.[1] It uses the situation of these Shakespearean characters to provide a focus for considering how the plays represent money and value in relation to the power of theatre.

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[1] Hamlet says of Gertrude: "Let me think on't: frailty, thy name is woman" (1.2.146). All references to Shakespeare's plays are to the Norton edition except those to *Troilus and Cressida* which are to the New Cambridge edition. Reference to *King Lear* is to the Norton conflated version. Emphasis in any quotations is in the original unless otherwise stated.

I. *The Merchant of Venice*

In his early writing on Shakespeare, Marx found that money was indeed a "visible god", as Timon of Athens affirmed (4.3.379). He continued in his 1844 manuscripts: "What I as a man cannot do, i.e. what all my individual powers cannot do, I can do with the help of *money*. Money therefore transforms each of these essential powers..." ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" 378). In *The Merchant of Venice*, it is the transformative power of money that Bassanio wishes to wield when he asks to borrow money from Antonio. In the context of the plot, Bassanio hopes to use money in order to measure up to Portia's other suitors. He tells Antonio he wants "the means / To hold a rival place with one of them" (1.1.173-174). His "mind presages [him that] such thrift / […] should questionless be fortunate" (1.1.175-176). In other words, he is sure that money will solve his problems: this investment will bring happiness and a bigger fortune. Money, according to Bassanio, will help to show Portia his true worth, his goodness. Where money is "the existing and active concept of value" as Marx put it, "[m]oney is the highest good, and consequently its owner is also good" ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" 377). Shylock explains that this is what he means when he says that "Antonio is a good man" (1.3.11): "My meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient" (1.3.13-14). Marx duly echoes in 1844, "[b]y a 'good' man the creditor, like Shylock, means a 'sufficient' man" ("Excerpts from James Mill" 263). Evidently, both *The Merchant of Venice* and Marx reflect on the question of social and economic worth.

The transformative power of money is soon realised in *The Merchant of Venice* in the form of the uniforms that Bassanio can finance for his servants: Lancelot hopes for a new position with "one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries" (2.2.96-97). It is highly significant that this wealth should become visible in this way because following his new found wealth Bassanio and his friend Graziano repeatedly use the language of costuming to explain how they will act and appear to others. Graziano promises to put on a "sober habit" (2.2.171) when they reach Belmont, while Bassanio allows Gaziano to put on his "boldest suit of mirth" (2.2.183), for that night at least. Antonio announces this implicit context of a *theatrum mundi* at the opening of the play when he says that he "hold[s] the world but as the world, Graziano – / A stage where every man must play a part" (1.1.77-78). What is significant in relation to Marx's early thinking on the power of money, however, is that in *The Merchant of Venice* characters only seem to be successful at dressing up, disguising themselves, or playing a different role if they have the necessary finances – that is, if they make the transformation using money. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the actor *par excellence* in the play is Portia, the main character with the most money.

In a reading of value in Shakespeare, Scott Wilson argues:

> The whole plot of *The Merchant of Venice* is based upon the central exchange of Portia to Bassanio via the caskets, an exchange over which she ostensibly has no control. Yet Portia achieves power over Antonio, Bassanio and even the whole of Venice through subverting the patriarchal system of exchange and her place in it as a woman, precisely as an object of exchange. (108)

Wilson goes on to suggest that "[s]he achieves this initially by seizing control of her father's wealth at the very moment of giving it away, and maintains hold of her wealth […] through her cunning" (108). This cunning is profoundly theatrical in that Portia maintains her power through a series of transformations – Portia, in the words of Peter Quince when seeing Bottom changed into an Ass in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.1.105), is "translated". She uses her family credit to persuade Doctor Bellario to let her take his place. She arranges for the appropriate "notes and garments" (3.4.51) so that she can dress up as "a young doctor of Rome" (4.1.152), a lawyer. In the world of the play it is ultimately money which provides the transformative power so that Portia can be translated into a man, into a lawyer and into a saviour (cf. Newman).

Given the value of money in the world of *The Merchant of Venice*, the question arises why Shylock cannot transform himself and his situation? A moralist might argue that by relying on money-bonds on the Rialto rather than friendship-bonds Shylock was doomed from the start.[2] Another voice might argue that this is what the Jewish Shylock should expect when he deals with Christians. In relation to the metaphysical reading of money that Marx provides in his early writing, however, it can be seen that the problem for Shylock is that he seems determined *not* to transform himself or his bond: he insists that "There is no power in the tongue of man / To alter me" (4.1.236-7). Portia soon translates the extraction of the bond's "award" of a pound of flesh into an "attempt[]" (4.1.345) by an "alien" (4.1.344) to "seek the life of [a] citizen" (4.1.346). Money puts Portia in a position to translate Shylock's act of revenge into an act of murder, but Shylock still insists on the letter of the law; and he would not think of exchanging his "Jewish gaberdine" (1.3.108) for something else. In contrast, as Jacques Derrida realised in his reading of *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia is "a woman who is disguised, transfigured, converted, travestied, read *translated*, into a man of the law" (183, emphasis in the original). As Derrida puts it, "[i]n the name of the letter of the contract, Shylock refuses the translation or transaction" (184). The "upshot", as Derrida explains,

> will be that Shylock loses everything in this translation of transaction, the monetary signs of his money as well as the literal pound of flesh – and even his religion, since when the situation takes a bad turn at his expense he will have to convert to Christianity, to translate himself (*convertere*) into a Christian. (189).

Derrida writes that "by resisting this transcription, this transaction which is a translation, this *relève*, Shylock delivers himself into the grasp of the Christian strategy, bound hand and foot" (199). The moral of the story is that according to a certain economy of pecuniary value, Shylock should have accepted the money while he still could – especially after Portia had translated the hypothetical pound of flesh into three times the monetary value of the original loan (4.1.229). It is Portia's use of money which disguises her own questionable ethics. When Antonio is rewarded with Shylock's wealth, Shylock is turned into foreign currency and forced to convert. In the

[2] Cf. Leinwand who describes how "Antonio's nostalgic fantasy that his arrangement with Shylock is but a 'merry bond' uncontaminated by interest-taking, operating outside of profit and loss, […] inevitably runs up against the reminder that Antonio is fully caught up in the circulation of Italian capital", 17)

context of Portia's power of translation and transformation, the play implicitly shows that one of the strengths of theatre is its ability to restage or retranslate situations, to provide a different perspective.

Portia is not explicitly described as a performer in *The Merchant of Venice*, but given the metaphor of costuming that runs through the play it is fitting that Portia should be described as "a lady richly left" (1.1.161) with "her sunny locks [that] / Hang on her temples like a golden fleece" (1.1.169-170). Just as actors use costumes to transform themselves in the theatre, so Portia uses money to transform herself. Wilson suggests that she becomes an "object of exchange", but arguably this is the case only in so far as she becomes like money; she uses her golden finances to fleece Shylock, enacting the transformative power of money. In the economy of the play she becomes, like money, "the existing and active concept of value" as Marx put it ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" 377). Shakespeare's company perform a sleight of hand, however: the theatrical magic is that as actors in the theatre they have been exchanged and transformed into various characters and disguises any number of times, and their production values are much lower than Portia's. This means that Shakespeare's drama can at least *stage* powerful transformations – transformations that for Marx were only possible in everyday life with the help of vast amounts of money.

II. *Troilus and Cressida*

In his early writing, Marx noted that "Shakespeare paints a brilliant picture of the nature of *money*" ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" 377). According to Marx,

> Shakespeare brings out two properties of money in particular:
> (1) It is the visible divinity […]
> (2) It is the universal whore, the universal pimp of men and peoples.
> ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" 377)

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia with her golden fleece becomes "a visible god" (*Timon of Athens*, 4.3.379). But Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* considers the second property of money, including, as the play does, the archetypal pimp in Pandarus and the accusations of whoredom concerning Patroclus, Helen of Troy, and Cressida. Pandarus says when Troilus and Cressida make their "bargain" (3.2.177) that, if they "prove false" (3.2.178), "let all pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end after my name: call them all panders" (3.2.180-181). Thersites calls Patroclus – who provides theatrical imitations of other characters in Achilles' tent – his "masculine whore" (5.1.17); referring to Helen, Menelaus and the Trojan War, Thersites says that "all the argument is a whore and a cuckold – a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon" (2.3.64-65); and, when Cressida is exchanged into the Greek Camp she is described by Ulysses as an "encounterer[]" (4.5.58) and a "daughter[] of the game" (4.5.63).[3] This is a world where Troilus's cry

[3] In *Twelfth Night*, Feste begs for another coin from Viola-in-disguise by saying "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus" (3.1.45-46), thus signalling the currency of their reputations. In *Henry V*, Pistol similarly calls Doll Tearsheet a "lazar kite of Cressid's kind" (2.1.69).

"What's aught but as 'tis valued?" (2.2.52) is frequently read as concerning economic value.

Aside from Antonio's stage metaphor in *The Merchant of Venice* and the language of costuming, the play does not especially frame action as theatrical performance. But as Anne Barton noticed in *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*,

> *Troilus and Cressida*, on the other hand, is filled with theatrical imagery, all of it of a kind most unflattering to the stage. Certain parts of *Troilus and Cressida*, in fact, express an attitude which might do credit to the author of some Puritan pamphlet. (162)

As Joseph Lenz summarises in his essay "Base Trade: Theater as Prostitution", "like a bawd, [theatre] advertises its product with effeminate gesture and costly apparel; like a prostitute, the motive is the same – *money*. Thus, the theater is a brothel, a pander, a whore, a way toward debauchery and a site for it" (833). *Troilus and Cressida* seems to respond to attacks on the public theatre that saw it as a site for prostitution and provocation, by biting the bullet and staging "theatre as prostitution": Pandarus stops halfway through the play to address the theatre audience leering: "And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here / Bed, chamber, pander, to provide this gear." (3.2.188-189). Pandarus ends the play by addressing the theatre audience as "Good traders in the flesh" (5.11.44) and saying: "Some two months hence […] I'll […] bequeath you my diseases" (5.11.50, 53-54). Lenz argues that "Pandarus voices the anxiety of the theatre, spitefully performing the role assigned to it, acknowledging its fraternity with prostitution" (852). Lenz finishes by speculating that in *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare reflects "awareness of the status of one's existence, and one's bitter resignation to that status" (852). However, Shakespeare's play does not *just* stage theatre and actors as prostitutes, promoting the similarities of their commercial base trade.

Troilus and Cressida frequently represents all relationships as on-going monetary and mercantile transactions. The most telling example of this depiction is Shakespeare's appropriation of one of Marlowe's mighty lines: in the Council scene as the Trojans debate whether to return Helen, Hector says that "she is not worth what she doth cost / The keeping" (2.2.51-52), but Troilus soon responds

> Is she worth keeping? Why, she is a pearl
> Whose *price* hath launched above a thousand ships
> And turned crowned kings to *merchants*. (2.2.81-82: emphasis added)

By making the world a stage of mercantile debased transactions, Shakespeare's Elizabethan *Troilus and Cressida* shows how the market is making everyone think like merchants, everyone's "hands [are] all dirty with the money" (Knopfler). In the *Dire Straits* song, "Wild West End", money makes the hands of the bus conductress literally dirty but Troilus sees commercial language as metaphorically repugnant when he asks if Hector will "Weigh […] the worth and honour of a king / So great as our dread father in a scale of common ounces?" (2.2.26-28). The notion of sovereigns turning to merchants was a topical issue in early modern Europe at a time of economic expansion but Troilus's questions also register an anxiety about the different kinds of valuation being used. In contrast to the powerful reputation of Helen and her affect on others as reported by Troilus, Cressida is represented as being especially vulnerable in the hands of Diomedes and those in the Greek camp. Likewise, Pandarus, rejected by Troilus, appears at the end of the play as a diseased panderer. He threatens to bequeath his

ailment to the audience but his veneral disease is not immediately transformed, translated – one might say transferred – to the audience.

The question of the affective power of Pandarus's threat has left critics and audiences bemused and confused. But the ambiguity of how Pandarus actually transfers his diseases emphasises that in the new world of Shakespearean dramaturgy the play's power is ostensibly contained within the circle of the "wooden O" (*Henry V*, Pro. 13), even if his plays are now seen as being thought-provoking. This line of argument follows the thesis of Paul Yachnin who suggests that during the period of 1590-1625 on the whole,

> the theatre that emerged in response to the conflicting pressures of censorship and commercialism was able to address topical issues, and thus to appeal to a large and heterogeneous audience, precisely because drama was perceived to be separate from real life and play was perceived to be separate from power. (3)

In the shaping of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, the Puck-as-Epilogue stresses that "this weak and idle theme" is "No more yielding but a dream" (Epilogue, 5, 6). Thus, Shakespeare's protective strategy was usually to present theatre as disinterested, as art for art's sake, and powerless. This idea suggests that the theatre does not have the power to transform audiences in the same way that money might. Theatre, in this view, is useless. However, Shakespeare's staging of money as a visible god in *The Merchant of Venice* and his representation of human relations as soiled mercantile transactions in *Troilus and Cressida* suggests that his theatre does provide space to think through the place of money, valuations and transactions – and Marx discovered that perspective when he came to write about money. Aside from their important entertainment value, Shakespeare's plays are powerful in their ability to *host thinking*; this is where we might locate the value of the theatre more precisely.

III. *King Lear*

Despite Kent's question "Is this the promised end?" (5.3.262) which is sometimes taken as a metatheatrical joke, *King Lear* does not include the theatrical self-consciousness of plays like *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*. However, Shakespeare's rewrite of the Cinderella-story does contain a character who is required to explain or translate her value. The final section of this essay suggests that Cordelia can be seen as an example of someone who refuses to be priced up. Following Paul Yachnin's reading of Shakespeare's theatre as being seen as powerless, this section speculates that her situation is analogous to a theatre that cannot clearly communicate its value. The dramatization of this issue may provide space for scrutinizing the problem of arts funding and the value of humanities research in a so-called "time of austerity".

Money is transferred a few times in the play between masters and servants, but Lear's investment in his daughters signifies the largest transfer. As Donald Freeman notes, at the start of the play, "Lear understands his relationships with his daughters in terms of the debits and credits of fiscal accounts" (1). For example:

> LEAR. Now our joy,
> Although our last and least; to whose young love
> The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
> Strive to be *interessed*, what can you say to *draw*

> A third more *opulent* than your sisters? Speak.
> CORDELIA. Nothing, my lord.
> LEAR. Nothing?
> CORDELIA. Nothing
> LEAR. Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.
> CORDELIA. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
> According to my bond; nor more nor less.
> LEAR. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
> Lest it may mar your *fortunes*. (1.1.81-94: emphasis added)

In his essay, Freeman shows how

> Lear seeks to balance his "bounty" (1.1.50) against the love his daughters say they have for him; his new investment in them must balance the return he has received on his previous investments […] Cordelia's "Nothing" is understood by her father only as a number (7).

Reading relationships in terms of balances instead of links, he does not understand that her "bond" refers to a family connection, a relationship that Cordelia refuses to discuss as if it is part of a system of financial transactions. The tragedy for King Lear is that he does not recognise the value of Cordelia – a value that means more than money. In contrast, the King of France shows in his subversion of the language of accounting that he recognises that Cordelia is "most rich, being poor" (1.1.251), an "unprized precious maid" (1.1.260). Shakespeare's *King Lear*, thus, stages the tragedy of *only* seeing relationships in relation to monetary metaphors and schemas, debts, investments, and financial returns. The play shows both the frailty of Lear's financial-filial thinking, and Cordelia's [read: the theatre's] frailty when seen in purely financial terms.

Shakespeare rarely explicitly frames theatre as a commercial enterprise. Richard Wilson notes in a reading of "Shakespeare via Bourdieu", that "one of the most outstanding myster[ies] of Shakespearean drama [is] that London's most successful commercial entertainment occludes its actual locale, by consistently staging scenes of aristocratic patronage, rather than holding a realistic mirror up to […] the metropolitan playhouse" (123). One of the few occasions when Shakespeare overtly dramatizes a discussion of money in relation to playmaking is in the aristocratic world of Elsinore where Rosencrantz describes the Poets' War: "There was for a while [he says] no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question" (*Hamlet*, 2.2.339-340). It may be significant, of course, that Shakespeare was a "poet-in-ordinary"; Melissa Aaron argues, for example, that "[b]ecause Shakespeare's company had a poet-in-ordinary among their sharers, they would have saved the expense of paying for at least one or two plays a year" (429). The lessons of the Poets' War show that playwrights were concerned about how the theatre and their plays were valued, often writing this concern into the play's texture, as Shakespeare did in *Hamlet* (cf. Bednarz and Gregory). As a "poet-in-ordinary" and financial sharer at the Globe, Shakespeare found a level of autonomy, not having to worry about which theatre would take his plays when he wrote them (cf. van Es). He remained loyal to the Globe theatre as a playwright, but it is perhaps as the labour of a *sharer* that his plays should be remembered, not forgetting that it was the relative financial security of his situation at the Globe that enabled Shakespeare to take some artistic risks.

This essay has argued that Shakespeare's plays might tell us something about how money affects relationships, including the connections between theatre and power. This is not because the ambiguous nature of money as explored by Shakespeare is necessarily *for all time* and clearly relevant, but because the characters in his plays and the money they use are caught up in a series of transformations and translations. For Hamlet, theatre represents fictions of real life, holding "as 'twere the mirror up to nature" (3.2.20); arguably, money is in an analogous position to theatre in that it can also stand for something else. At times it seems as though money becomes an end in itself, but this is true too for theatre, itself, in Shakespeare's aesthetic, when the play seems incapable of affecting the audience. However, the act of translating the concerns of Shakespeare's contemporaries and his plays into our own time, whether in theoretical debates, as a theatre director or an audience member, offers the impetus to discover what we value most. In this light, it is not a question of standing up for Shakespeare in a time of cuts in arts funding and questionable uses of Shakespeare for educational purposes and in immigration integration questionnaires (cf. *BBC News*), but, rather, letting Shakespeare stand up for us. That is, Shakespeare's plays invite us to translate their concerns with different kinds of capital carefully onto the "bitter disposition of the time" (*Troilus and Cressida* 4.1.59); this translation involves being aware of the social stigma sometimes attached to both money and theatre in early modern England and our own day.

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Zusammenfassung

In der Regel werden Shakespeares Narren wesentlich als Symbole der Theatralität und Performanz gedeutet. In diesem Beitrag untersuche ich Portia, Cressida und Cordelia als Figuren, die auch den Marktcharakter des Theaters und Währungskonzepte in den Vordergrund rücken: Portia lenkt den Blick auf Formern der Finanzierung des Theaters, Cressida erinnert an soziale und ökonomische Kontaktpunkte zwischen dem frühneuzeitlichen Theater und dem Bordell, Cordelia versinnbildlicht das Unvermögen des Theaters, Werte zu vermitteln. Der Beitrag beleuchtet folglich das Theater als Ort der Wertschöpfung im Kontext des frühneuzeitlichen Marktes und befragt die Autonomie Shakespeares als Akteur und Künstler in diesem Marktgeschehen.

abstract

The figure of the Fool is often read as a symbol of theatrical performance, but this essay briefly explores the theatrical symbolism of Portia, Cressida and Cordelia. It argues that Shakespeare's characterisation of these three women can be seen to foreground issues of theatrical value and currency: Portia's characterisation invites the audience to reflect on the power of a (financed) theatre; the characterisation of Cressida negotiates the social and economic proximity of the theatre and the brothel; and, in Cordelia, *King Lear* seems to bewail the apparent failure of theatre to communicate its value. The essay thus responds to critical thinking on the making of theatrical value, the staging of performance, and the question of Shakespeare's own artistic autonomy.

GIFT, CREDIT AND OBLIGATION IN *TIMON OF ATHENS*

ANNE ENDERWITZ*

Introduction

Timon of Athens is a gold mine for gift theorists. Timon's excessive gift-giving has been compared with a Potlatch ritual (Bevington and Smith 76; Jackson 38). Calculation meets excess when the Athenian lords present Timon with gifts in order to receive more expensive ones. This investment strategy operates on the basis of the principle of reciprocity, which Marcel Mauss established as key feature of the gift in his landmark essay on gift-exchange from 1923. The play appears to address what Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen identified as "the problem for gift theorists": "the relationship between gift exchanges and self-interest or profit" (28-29). This, however, is only half the story. For despite its concern with reciprocity, *Timon of Athens* explores the possibility of gift-giving beyond the imperative of exchange.

In gift theory, gift-giving as a quasi economic system of exchange is often criticised with reference to Derrida's remarks on the gift in *Given Time*. *Timon*'s interest in the "beyond" of gift exchange led Ken Jackson (2001) to offer a fascinating reading on the basis of Derrida's idea of the pure gift which plays no part in the cycle of exchange. In Derrida's familiar diction: "there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, countergift, or debt" (12). This definition implies that not even the one who gives can realise that he offers a gift: "otherwise he begins (…) as soon as he intends to give, to pay himself with a symbolic recognition, to praise himself, to approve of himself" (14). Not surprisingly, the pure gift as described by Derrida is impossible.

As fascinating as Jackson's reading is, I believe that the use of Derrida obscures the fact that *Timon of Athens* invokes a version of "true giving", which is less absolute and much more pragmatic than Derrida's pure gift. In *Timon of Athens*, the counterpart of reciprocity is not an impossibility but a unilateral practice of giving based on need. The moral logic of need invoked in the play cannot be inflated to an ideal or pure gift, but it has the power to question the dominance of the paradigm of exchange as well as the formal egoism of economic theories.[1] Focusing on the first half of the play, this paper interprets the juxtaposition of different moral principles in *Timon of Athens* as a critical comment on the culture of credit in early modern times.[2]

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[1] Cf. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen's critique of the standard economic account according to which agents base their decisions solely on what maximizes their personal utility ("Rational Fools").

[2] Famously, Craig Muldrew called this culture "creditism" (2), a term that describes the complex and multiple networks of credit which characterised early modern English society.

Credit and Gift: Reciprocity and Beyond

Before discussing the logic of need any further, we have to establish the grounds on which the gift can tell us anything at all about the early modern culture of credit. Although Mauss discusses the gift in specific cultural contexts, his work may act as an inspiration for analysing the relation between gift and credit. After all, Mauss attempts a "*general* theory of obligation" (16, *my emphasis*) and the problem of obligation is very much at the center of *Timon of Athens*.

In Mauss's analysis, "it is in the nature of the gift to impose an obligatory time limit" (45). The deferred reciprocity of the gift also characterises the credit. This emerges in Mauss's genealogy of the credit:

> Now, the gift necessarily entails the notion of the credit. The evolution in economic law has not been from barter to sale, and from cash sale to credit sale. On the one hand, barter has arisen through a system of presents given and reciprocated according to a time limit. This was through a process of simplification, by reductions in periods of time formerly arbitrary. On the other hand, buying and selling arose in the same way, with the latter according to a fixed time limit, or by cash, as well as by lending. (46-47)

Gift and credit are structurally similar: both constitute an obligation to reciprocate at a later date. Nonetheless, the gift is not reducible to the logic of credit and debt. Mauss himself, despite Derrida's critique, insisted on the hybrid character of the gift exchange, on the tension between "gift and economy, generosity and self-interest, voluntariness and obligation" (Därmann 111, *my translation*). In the "atmosphere of the gift", Mauss writes, "obligation and liberty intermingle" (83). [3]

An important difference lies then in the specific nature of the obligations incurred by credit and gift. As Amanda Bailey sums it up with regard to the early modern culture of credit, "In the case of borrowing and lending on bond, (...) punitive measures stepped in where inner virtue flagged" (386). In the case of the gift, the obligation is a moral one. People who fail to return a gift cannot be brought to justice in court: their debt is non-enforceable. Arguably, in an act that is stripped of legal implications, the moral status comes to the fore. Mary Douglas claims that the gift economy is "more readily subject to public scrutiny and judgements of fairness than are the results of market exchange" (xviii). A reason for this may be that the principle of reciprocity is not inviolable. Iris Därmann points out that any gift can remain unrequited, be it by accident or not (cf. 25). Without its similarity with the credit, the gift could hardly shed light on the problem of obligation in a culture of credit but it is the specific nature of the obligation that draws attention to a gift's moral logic.

Timon of Athens goes a step further: it poses the question whether the deferred reciprocity that constitutes the structural similarity between credit and gift can be taken as a given at all. The necessary affiliation of gift and exchange is exactly what is at

[3] Mauss, however, implicitly strengthens the importance of the obligation when he describes the effect of the unilateral gift: "The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it" (83).

stake in the play. For anthropologist David Graeber, whose recent book *Debt: The First 5000 Years* (2011) has been widely discussed, moral relations are neither derived from nor governed by the logic of exchange, which subsumes credit and debt. Exchange is simply one of three main moral principles, "which occur in any human society" (94).[4] As Graeber sees it, these principles "tend to be invoked, wherever people transfer objects back and forth or argue about what other people owe them" (89). Reducing gift-giving *a priori* to "the moral logic of exchange, and hence of debt" (Graeber 89) may obscure this plurality of motives. In *Timon of Athens* gift-giving extends beyond the logic of reciprocity to offer a glimpse of a different idea of "giving", which is motivated by the need of the other. In this case, obligation towards the other is not the result of but precedes any gift. *Timon of Athens* invokes this idea only to deny its viability in a world dominated by exchange and driven by profit. The play articulates not just anxieties about financial failure[5] and "false friends" (Davison 185) but offers a more fundamental critique of the paradigm of exchange or, in Peter Grav's terms, "of how economic determinants influence and shape humanity" (2).

Contending Paradigms in *Timon of Athens*

In order to pursue the traces of a principle other than reciprocity, we have to follow the track of the unilateral gift. The Ventidius episode from Act 1, Scene 1, is crucial in this respect: placed at the very beginning of the play it invokes a logic which is only too easily forgotten in the light of later events. Timon provides help for Ventidius when he is in need and rejects Ventidius's later offer to repay him. With his definition of what constitutes "true giving", Timon questions the logic of reciprocity explicitly:

> Honest Ventidius, you mistake my love:
> I gave it freely ever, and there's none
> Can truly say he gives if he receives. (1.2.9-11)

In the scene following his gift to Ventidius, Timon gives money to an honest servant who seeks to marry the daughter of a wealthy man. He justifies this gift with "a bond in men" (1.1.148). In these initial scenes, Timon develops the idea of a true gift, which must not be reciprocated, and which is based on need and solidarity between men. If we take the term gift in a broad sense as "the thing given" (OED) rather than the thing sold (a commodity), we can speak of the bifurcation of a paradigm when comparing the Ventidius episode with Timon's later gifts to his peers. In the case of Ventidius the gift is informed by a logic of need, in later cases by a logic of reciprocity: the lords count on a return gift which Timon delivers promptly. Crucially, this bifurcation does not imply an absolute separation. Compare Timon's later message to Ventidius, which addresses a friend in a situation of need *and* implies a precisely numbered financial obligation from an earlier gift:

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[4] Graeber introduces the other two principles under the headings of "communism" and "hierarchy" respectively (94).

[5] According to Jowett, the play articulates "the fear that credit arrangements might all too readily collapse" ("Middleton and Debt in *Timon of Athens*", 230).

> I cleared him with five Talents. Greet him from me,
> Bid him suppose some good necessity,
> Touches his friend which craves to be remembered
> With those five Talents… (2.2.226-229)

Here, both logics are employed at once for additional leverage.

Timon's discourse on friendship can be read as further elaborating on "true giving":

> O no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you – how had you been my friends else? (…) We are born to do benefits, and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes. (1.2.87-103)

Friendship is defined by the willingness to help each other. In Timon's speech, help is a matter between equals ("like brothers"). The phrase "commanding one another's fortunes" implies that things are freely given and taken. The willingness to share does not, however, imply disregard of one's interests or pure altruism for in Timon's speech on friendship the help is conceptualised as mutual. Nonetheless, in this logic, friendship surpasses self-interest directed towards wealth. Earlier in the second scene, Timon says this explicitly: "Pray sit, more welcome are ye to my fortunes / Than my fortunes to me" (1.2.19-20).

The speech on friendship can be read in conjunction with Timon's "self-definitional" utterance (Grav 145) in the first scene in which Ventidius is imprisoned and asks for money to satisfy his creditors. Timon constructs here a close connection between friendship and need:

> I am not of that feather to shake off
> My friend when he most needs me. I do know him
> A gentleman that well deserves a help,
> Which he shall have. I'll pay the debt and free him. (1.1.104-106)

A true friend is here marked as someone who will provide help in a case of need without asking for a return. As Grav points out, "there is no evidence of an expectation of reciprocal kindness" (145) in this statement.

Timon's speech on friendship from the second scene quoted above is different. Here Timon makes it quite clear that he will be in need of help from his friends at some point in the future – and that he will surely receive it. One could argue that the principle of reciprocity, which was exorcised in Timon's definition of true giving, re-enters through the backdoor. Indeed, in his essay "Middleton and Debt in *Timon of Athens*", Jowett describes the "socioeconomic foundations of friendship" as "based on reciprocity" (224). For Jackson, Timon's speech on friendship expresses even "a hyper-interest in exchange relationships" (52), a radical reduction of others to the function of exchange. This argument is strengthened by a part of the speech on friendship, which I left out in the above quotation. Timon exclaims here: "O you gods, think I, what need we have any friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em? They were the most needless

creatures living should we ne'er have use for 'em…" (1.2.93-96). Admittedly, Timon's emphasis on the utility of friends in these lines is troubling. They are reduced to the function of providing a reciprocal kind of help.

When we compare these statements, Timon emerges as an ambivalent figure. In his chapter on *Timon*, Grav partly explains this ambivalence with the dual authorship of the play: the "selfless", philanthropic Timon of the opening scene is Shakespeare's work, the prodigal one of the second scene is Middleton's creation (137). As Grav puts it, Middleton "bridges Timon's philanthropy and misanthropy" (137). The Shakespearean Timon seeks an escape from the all-pervasive economy of exchange and is later "driven to extremes by the realization that his society runs completely counter to the selfless philanthropy he had once incarnated" (Grav 143). Although it is possible to diagnose a breach within the figure of Timon, the speech on friendship from the second scene testifies to an ambivalence that runs so deep – even within one and the same speech – that it cannot be explained solely by dividing the play according to authorship. It marks Timon as a figure that wavers between different logics, making use of both at different times and sometimes even at the same time. Obliterating this ambivalence in favour of the logic of reciprocity seems as little justified as turning Timon into a selfless hero of compassion. With Derrida in mind, who frames the pure gift as impossible, it is natural to suspect reciprocity and exchange at the root of Timon's expectation of help. My aim, however, is to trace and differentiate types of gift-giving within the play, instead of identifying the same basic pattern at the heart of every gift transaction. For this end, I suggest to reserve "reciprocity" for a gift that is embedded in conventions of gift exchange. While help may also be considered reciprocal, the point with the logic of need is precisely that the favour is not necessarily returned. In his chapter on the "sociology of everyday communism" (100), Graeber distinguishes the expectation of mutual support and help from reciprocity in the context of exchange. Graeber defines communism in unorthodox terms, as "any human relationship that operates on the principles of 'from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs'" (94). He argues "we are not really dealing with reciprocity here – or at best, only with reciprocity in the broadest sense. What is equal on both sides is the knowledge that the other person *would* do the same for you, not that they necessarily *will*" (100).

Graeber suggests using a different word than reciprocity for "mutual expectations and responsibilities" (102). Whether his half-hearted suggestion – "mutuality" (103) – makes the difference more visible or not: we run the risk of missing an important distinction if we identify the notion of mutual help or solidarity with the necessary reciprocity of a quasi-economic exchange of goods. In the case of the logic of need, the obligation constitutes the starting point rather than the end product and it is not an obligation on the grounds of a prior gift but on the grounds of friendship and / or the human bond.[6]

[6] The notion of the "logic of need" borrows not only from Graeber's "communism" but also from Aafke Komter's "community sharing": "In "community sharing", things are mainly exchanged on the basis of feelings of connectedness to other people. What one gives is not dependent on what one has received, but springs from one's perception of other people's needs" (98).

Crucially, in *Timon of Athens* the moral principle of helping those in need – where it is applied at all – leads to monetary solutions. When the old Athenian complains about his daughter who wants to marry a servant, Timon endows the man with a fortune that equals her dowry: "What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise" (1.1.149). Timon's declaration "the man is honest" (1.1.132) is not enough to convince the old Athenian of the man's worth. The human bond can only be done justice by economic means. Different logics are made compatible through money as the great equaliser.[7] Clearly, the logic of need does not operate outside of economic practices. It would be wrong to assume that economic practices and practices of gift-giving constitute necessarily antagonistic and incompatible systems.

Conclusion

To sum up, *Timon of Athens* invokes different moral principles that guide actions as well as their assessment. I distinguished two principles that govern and rationalise gift-giving in the play: the logic of need and the logic of reciprocity. The latter is well known. It has been described by anthropologists such as Mauss and Lévi-Strauss and it configures gift-giving as an exchange, even though this exchange can be asymmetrical. Timon's peers employ this logic as an investment strategy. At the same time, the hierarchical form of reciprocity practised by Timon (returning a gift, but giving much more than one has received) enables him to achieve a higher social status.[8] It is paternal on Timon's part and profitable on the lords' part. Jowett points out that "Timon's role as host, an ambiguous position of first among equals, creates a theoretical uncertainty as to what lies beyond the paternalism of the moment's giving" (224).

The logic of need, on the other hand, informs gifts that are prompted by the need of the other. The help that is provided is potentially mutual as between "like brothers". Here, equals command each other's fortunes, and one may give and take according to needs. It is in reference to this logic that Timon exclaims to Flavius: "Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use / As I can bid thee speak" (2.2.179). Gift-giving based on need may also be embedded in the patriarchal structure of patron and servant. In both cases, help is provided on the grounds of an obligation that precedes any gift. It is created by the shared fact of being human, a bond which may be fortified by friendship or a paternal sense of responsibility.

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[7] Cf. Woodbridge: "The crucial enabling move of sixteenth-century mathematics, the conversion of unlikes to a single scale finds an often sinister expression in Renaissance literature" (Woodbridge, 11).

[8] In her foreword to *The Gift*, Mary Douglas explains that the reciprocity of the gift exchange can be based on equality or hierarchy: "In some cases the specified return is of equal value, producing a stable system of statuses; in others it must exceed the value of the earlier gift, producing an escalating contest for honour." (xi) Timon's excessive gifts constitute a display of superiority. Mauss also addresses the problem of uneven reciprocity in his writings about the potlatch: "It would seem they need not all be reciprocated unconditionally, particularly when they are the work of a chief recognized in the clan as superior…" (53).

Timon portrays the logic of reciprocity in gift-giving in fairly problematic terms. With its drive towards excess, the logic of reciprocity destroys the credit that feeds Timon's extravagance. While the material debt is repaid with Timon's lands, any possible moral obligation on the part of the lords is ignored. In gift-giving, where the logic of reciprocity is governed by convention rather than law, this logic appears both asymmetrical and unreliable.

The logic of need also loses out against the exchange logic of credit and debt. The lords are not willing to give or lend money without the expectation of a secure and possibly profitable return. Lucullus states: "Draw nearer, honest Flaminius. Thy lord's a bountiful Gentleman, but thou art wise and thou knowst well enough, although thou com'st to me, that this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship without security" (3.1.39-43).

Nonetheless, it is counterproductive to conceptualise the logic of need and the credit as antagonistic and incompatible principles. A point of contact between the logic of need and early modern culture of credit are the principles of "neighbourliness" and "friendship", which the historian Keith Wrightson described in his work *English Society, 1580-1680* (1982). A "notion much employed by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century people" (51), neighbourliness "involved a mutual recognition of reciprocal obligations of a practical kind" (51). It encompassed "numerous instances of support and aid" (52) amongst neighbours of which credit constituted an important part. Muldrew confirms this: "lending on a small scale to one's poorer neighbours was a duty of Christian charity" (113).

Between neighbours the "network of credit and debt" seems to have operated at least partly on the basis of need and without expectation of profit:

> interest does not usually seem to have been charged on small sums, though both interest and the drawing up of formal bonds becomes apparent in the case of substantial sums of money. Doubtless the interest on small sums was in the form of the 'social interest' of goodwill and the tacit assumption of reciprocal aid in time of need, something on which no cash value could be placed. (Wrightson 53)

Although the creditor probably expected to be repaid, credit was given when needed and without expectation of gain: "people with spare money were ready to lend it to neighbours, doubtless knowing that they would borrow in their turn if the need arose" (52). Friends were even more likely to help each other. Wrightson describes friendship as a relation, which went "far beyond the obligations owed to either neighbours or the broader kin" (55). Clifford Davison, who emphasises the importance of friendship in *Timon*, describes the Renaissance idea of friendship as "a bond which is not only a radiant ideal but is also an expression of a most necessary kind of good will that makes society cohesive" (185).

With their refusal to lend on "bare friendship", the lords reject the logic of need as a guiding principle. In juxtaposing Timon's material debt with the lords' moral obligation, the play depicts a world in which moral obligations suffer while the debt bond thrives. Yet there is little ground for contending that the play vilifies credit in general: it criticises the weakening of moral obligations and their substitution through legal ones, the dominance of the principle of exchange in contrast to need, and the

excessive nature of large-scale borrowing. Most of all, *Timon of Athens* depicts the erosion of friendship and human solidarity in a world driven by profit. There seems to be no escape from the culture of exchange. As Jowett points out, even the gold, which Timon finds in the woods, does not constitute an exception: "Timon circulates wealth that has circulated before, and so, paradoxically, he finds himself in the very middle of economic culture at the very point when he was most sure that he had escaped it" (86).

Although the representation of Athens in the play affords a bleak outlook, critics have pointed out that the class of the servants may be exempt from this damning picture.[9] The servants comment critically on the lack of friends in misery and Flavius, the stewart, happily shares his money between his fellow servants without insinuating any kind of obligation.

> Good Fellows all,
> The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.
> Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake
> Let's yet be fellows… (4.2.23-25)

Whether *Timon of Athens* generally invokes the decline of friendship and solidarity between humans, or whether it marks greed and excess as a rich people's problem, targeting specifically court patronage under James I:[10] with the logic of need it introduces a paradigm of giving which has the power to question the primacy of exchange in theories of the gift – and of social relations in general.

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[9] Clifford Davison emphasises the loyalty of Timon's servants in his essay "Timon of Athens: The Iconography of False Friendship" (1980:187). Derek Cohen makes a case for the importance of the servants, albeit in a slightly different context, in "The Politics of Wealth" (1993).

[10] David Bevington and David L. Smith paint an impressive picture of James extravagance in "James I and 'Timon of Athens'" (1999). Coppélia Kahn's discussion of Jacobean patronage and Timon is informed by feminist and psychoanalytic criticism (1987).

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Zusammenfassung

Im Spannungsfeld von Kredit und Gabe geht *Timon of Athens* der Frage von Reziprozität und Verpflichtung nach. Der Aufsatz entwickelt die These, dass Timons Praktiken des Schenkens die notwendige Verknüpfung von Gabe und Reziprozität, wie sie von Anthropologen im Sinne des Gabentausches beschrieben wurde, in Frage stellen. *Timon of Athens* konfrontiert das Paradigma der Reziprozität mit einer anderen Handlungslogik: einer Bedarfslogik, die über die scheinbar all-umfassende Sphäre des Tausches hinausweist und sich nicht an Eigeninteresse, sondern an dem orientiert, was der andere braucht. Auch wenn *Timon of Athens* das Scheitern dieser Bedarfslogik inszeniert, muss doch in der Weise der Darstellung und impliziten Bewertung verschiedener ökonomischer Handlungslogiken eine Kritik der frühneuzeitlichen Kreditkultur gesehen werden.

abstract

The essay addresses the problem of reciprocity and obligation in the context of credit and gift in *Timon of Athens*. It seeks to show to what extent Timon's practices of gift-giving question the necessary link between gift and reciprocity frequently described by anthropologists. *Timon of Athens* contrasts the logic of reciprocity with a different

logic: a logic of need that points beyond a seemingly all-pervasive exchange paradigm and is governed by what the other requires rather than by self-interest. Even if the play enacts the failure of this logic of need, its way of representing and evaluating different logics of action constitutes a critique of the early modern culture of credit.

Starving against Gold: Spenser's Mammon Canto in *Timon of Athens*

GALENA HASHHOZHEVA*

Although brilliant in its exploration of finance and the social life of wealth, *Timon of Athens* transcends these concerns and refuses its widely repeated classification as a Middletonian city comedy modulated into a satiric tragedy. Beyond the operations of credit and default so characteristic of the co-author Middleton, *Timon of Athens* offers an etiology of gold of the kind that Spenser developed in *The Faerie Queene* II.vii, the story of Guyon's encounter with the god Mammon.[1] Shakespeare's parts in *Timon of Athens* echo Spenser in their reflections on the origins of gold, its extraction from the bowels of the earth, and its relation to things that live and grow.[2] Nor was Shakespeare the only author writing in a profligate Stuart era who found appeal in Spenser's mythical-moral thinking about gold.[3] For a number of seventeenth-century texts, the Mammon canto becomes a primal scene that reveals man's exorbitant lust for the precious metal. In Jonson's *Alchemist*, the identities of Mammon and Sir Guyon are travestied and then fused to produce the figure of Sir Epicure Mammon. Like Guyon, Jonson's character is a knight, but a profligate Epicurean rather than a temperate Stoic knight. He is also an unconvincing Mammon: he has difficulty tempting the resistant Surly with rubbish that, purportedly, is soon to be transmuted into gold. Milton's *Paradise Regained* likewise draws on Spenser to stage the temptation scene during which Satan lays before Jesus the same range of worldly goods purchasable with gold that Mammon offers to Guyon (viii, xi): food, military power, fame, honors, and kingship.[4] Furthermore, *Paradise Regained* appears to resemble *Timon of Athens* in its ability to generate dramatic tension from its protagonist's immobilized position. Both Timon and Jesus are anchored in the wilderness, having turned away from the world. Considering these various echoes and parallels, the pattern that emerges is a remarkable recursive kinship: the Mammon canto lives on in *Paradise Regained* and in *Timon of Athens*, which in turn may have had an intermediate influence on *Paradise Regained*.

Such an intersection in the afterlives of the Mammon canto and *Timon of Athens* is no more surprising than their likely use of the same classical source text: Lucian's comic dialogue *Timon, Or the Misanthrope*. Shakespeare's Timon may have learnt to rant from Lucian's protagonist, while Spenser's Mammon wears the garb of Lucian's

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1 Jowett (62-68) discusses the influence of Spenser on *Timon of Athens* at some length.

2 The distribution of Shakespeare's and Middleton's work in *Timon* is a matter of ongoing research. I follow the distribution given in Jowett (2).

3 On *Timon* and its topical allusions to the early Stuart reign, see Hadfield (200-215).

4 The story of Guyon's temptation in Mammon's underworld haunted Milton throughout his career: its traces are in *Comus*, *Areopagitica*, and *Paradise Lost*. An exhaustive account of parallels between the Mammon canto and Milton's work can be found in the relevant sections of the *Variorum Spenser* and in particular, in the Appendix "Spenser and Milton"; see Greenlaw (427-31).

allegorical figure Plutos, or Riches.[5] Both the second half of *Timon of Athens* and the conflict in the Mammon canto are based on the same schema already available in Lucian — a schema that John Jowett describes as "a rude man cloistered in the wild woods surrounded by a mass of gold he has extracted from the earth, which he first hides from a visitor and then uses to tempt him" (63). Jowett's formulation suggests a parallel between Mammon and Timon as he dangles his newly found forest treasure in front of a never-ending stream of visitors. Instead of singing the Mammonist paeans to gold, however, Timon hates and curses it. If Timon is a tempter, he is a perverse one, for he offers the gold as an instrument not of prosperity but of misery or outright destruction.

The role of tempter is vexingly intertwined in Timon with the role of a victim of others' temptations. In a sense, Timon's visitors tempt him to become human again by forcing upon him their own humanity. Driven by either self-interest or the instinctual gregariousness of their species, the citizens of Athens try to seduce the resolved misanthrope out of his misanthropy because, as the classical dictum goes, man is a political animal and cannot exist in isolation. The Athenians use flattery, sarcasm, compassion, insults, pleas, and tears to lure Timon back into society and its system of mutual benefits, abuses, and duties. The more selfish tempters — the senators, the Poet, and the Painter — attempt to defeat Timon's misanthropy with promises of power, gifts, honors, and avowals of service and submission. The more selfless tempters offer the misanthropic hermit food or gold as charity. In one of his better moments, the banished Alcibiades wants to give Timon a little of the already depleted store of gold he keeps for supporting his soldiers (4.3.99). The weeping Flavius, Timon's former steward, offers his master the money he has saved over years of service (4.3.480). And Apemantus, for all his aggressiveness, seems to have brought food from the city because he can conjecture Timon's growing alimentary discomfort in the forest (4.3.284; 304). All in all, Timon is tempted by sympathetic and self-serving Athenians more frequently and obtrusively than they are tempted by him. In his rejection of their offers and his insistence to remain in the wilderness, misanthropic Timon is no less Christ-like than Guyon.

One of the most intense experiences for both Timon and Guyon is their voluntary hunger endured to the point of starvation. Such self-starvation is particularly striking in *Timon of Athens*, a near-bulimic play in its first half, although it is no less significant in the Legend of Temperance, which introduces the problem of hedonistic extremes during a feast in the House of Medina (II.ii) and resolves it in an allegory of the perfectly digesting human body in the House of Alma (II.ix). Timon and Guyon must refuse all sustaining care of their bodies in order to raise an absolute existential protest against gold. Although Guyon makes it clear from the beginning that he will not accept any of Mammon's gold, he agrees to undergo a test to prove his integrity. The test consists in a trip through Mammon's realm, during which Mammon wishes to educate Guyon on the nature and value of gold, with the calculation that this may cause him to change his mind. When Guyon remains steadfast in his refusal of Mammon's offers,

[5] Prescott (451) notes the outward similarity between Plutos and Mammon. See also Greenlaw (253) for another verbal echo from Lucian's Plutos in Spenser's description of Mammon, which was detected by John Upton, an early editor and annotator of Spenser's work.

Mammon adjusts the test so that the rejection of gold becomes, through a chain of substitutions, equivalent to the necessity of rejecting sleep, drink, and food. Gold in *Timon of Athens* likewise turns up in place of food, posing as the last and only thing required for life to continue. As the ruined Timon flees to the woods, it seems that henceforth his sole business with gold will be to curse it for having once owned it. Yet gold returns to Timon just when he has renounced everything in life but the bare minimum of nourishment. While digging for edible roots in the forest, by ill chance he finds a treasure.

Timon's hardship poignantly demonstrates how atavistic the wresting of roots from the earth is. Timon can no longer delight in conventional food, whose production involves human beings in an economy of services and dependencies, thereby offending Timon's misanthropy. Instead, Timon chooses to eat the wild growth of the forest — and he eats it raw. In a sense, he reverts to the primitive condition of a gatherer who finds rather than produces his food. This is Timon's reaction against the agricultural foundations of the civilization he loathes.

Agriculture is present in the background of *Timon* as a concomitant of the early modern country house topos. Like *Timon*, country house texts such as Jonson's "To Penshurst" flaunt an ideology of bounty, gentility, and hospitality, whose material substratum consists of the farming fields, orchards, and hunting parks that surround a great lord's manor. Although the first, prosperous, half of *Timon* takes place mostly in an urban setting, it also nods in the direction of the countryside. The hunting scene (2.2), for example, takes place in parks outside the city and may allude to the favorite pastime of England's notoriously prodigal monarch James I and of his courtiers (Hadfield 200-203). Great hunting parties, sometimes headed by James himself, stayed at country houses for extended periods, with expenditures well above what the host's estate could reasonably cover. This, however, is not the sort of cavil that Jonson can admit into "Penshurst," at least not explicitly, when celebrating the visit that James I and Prince Henry paid to the famed manor of the Sidneys.[6] While "Penshurst" intends to sustain the idyll of the country house, *Timon of Athens* exposes it as a delusion that ruined the Jacobean landed nobility and gentry in such great numbers. The hereditary status of the land and its agrarian and monetary yields created in the privileged class a sense of false security and entitlement to extravagance. The same reflex prompts Timon to order, unreflectively, that all his land be sold so as to pay off his debts (2.2.140). His steward Flavius, however, reports that the land is already "engaged, some forfeited and gone, / And what remains will hardly stop the mouth / Of present dues" (2.2.141-43). Yet Timon cannot digest this; he objects, with a blind conviction that even his wildest spending could not match up to the worth of his land: "To Lacedaemon did my land extend" (2.2.146).

As the wilderness and the primitive digging for roots come to replace civilization with its arable lands, cornucopian country houses, and bustling cities, *Timon of Athens*

[6] He does, however, make much of the unexpectedness of the visit of James and Henry to Penshurst — indeed so much that we may begin to suspect that it may have proved an unwelcome burden; see in particular lines 76-88.

invokes the classical anthropological topos of the four ages of man.[7] Shakespeare's use of the Ovidian version of the myth is apparent from such verbal echoes as the hips and mast that, according to Timon, the earth untouched by man abundantly provides as a source of sustenance for everyone (4.3.412). In Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, hips and acorns are listed among the gifts of nature that made up the original diet of men during the golden age (I.119 and 121). Despite its name, the golden age knew no gold and no agriculture either — a meaningful exclusion that hints at their unholy alliance. After all, by producing and accumulating desirable goods in excess of nature's supply, agriculture opened the road to an economy of gold, trade, private property, and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. Ovid underlines the ideological continuity and the physical analogy between tilling the earth to produce food, which was an invention of the silver age, and mining the earth for precious metals, which started during the iron age: "Not only corn and other fruits for sust'nance and for store / Were now extracted of the earth, but eft they gan to dig / And in the bowels of the ground unsatiably to rig / For riches couched and hidden deep in places near to hell" (I.154-57).

These two evils — for agriculture is an evil insofar as it is yet another form of departure from innocence — are intertwined also in Shakespeare's and Spenser's visions of mankind's degeneration from its original condition. The opening words of Guyon's sermon on the unnaturalness of gold mining are strikingly ambiguous: the accursed moment when the human hand began "the quiet wombe / Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound" (vii.16) may be the birth of mining or else the birth of agriculture. Guyon's comparison of proud and greedy man to a "corn-fed steed" (vii.16) begs the question whether corn, that agricultural gold, does not incite the hubris of human beings as much as gold itself does. In Ovid's myth the growing of corn epitomizes the unnaturalness of agriculture, in particular its filthy practice of spreading "muck [...] on lean and barren land / To make the corn of better head and ranker for to stand" (I.125-26). Agriculture and mining are both excremental: the former smearing the face of the earth with feces, the latter forcing the earth's retentive bowels to discharge as it were their own rocky droppings.

In the spirit of this Ovidian censure of agriculture, Timon departs in one crucial respect from his prototype in two of Shakespeare's likely sources for the play: Lucian's dialogue *Timon, Or the Misanthrope* and Boiardo's derivative comedy *Timone*. These works present the ruined Timon in the constant act of digging, yet not because he is looking for roots but rather because he is tilling the earth.[8] In his state of complete indigence, the non-Shakespearean Timon has sought work and settled for the meanest employment available: that of a field hand. The food that he earns in this manner has

[7] I am grateful to Stephen Deng, who also participated in the 2013 Shakespeare Seminar, for alerting me to this Ovidian topos in connection with Timon's digging.

[8] In Lucian (363) Timon describes himself as a "man at work" who is "earning his wages." In Boiardo (283) Timon is seen working with a hoe and a mattock, and he calls himself a "hired laborer." Another related text — which may be a source, an analogue, or a pastiche of Shakespeare's play — is the anonymous English comedy *Timon*, where a character refers to Timon as a "digger" in the fields and a "rustic" (82). However, no wages are mentioned here, and it seems that Timon is digging mainly in order to "wound" the earth and make it "gape" and "spew out" its noxious vapors and harmful winds (*Timon* 84).

been negotiated in economic terms — something that would be unbearable to Shakespeare's protagonist. Indeed, the diet of found roots stands out even more in the context of two authorial slips that carry over unsuitable details from the source texts into *Timon of Athens*. Both slips occur in the same speech by Apemantus as he questions the authenticity of Timon's misanthropy: "Why this spade, this place / This slave-like habit, and these looks of care?" (4.3.204-205). The "slave-like habit" and the spade are probably traces from the Lucianic Timon's toiling in the fields for hire. Yet although these two details have wandered into *Timon of Athens*, it is unlikely that Shakespeare intended for his misanthrope to sell his labor and put his sustenance at the mercy of other men. Particularly unexpected is the "slave-like habit," since the play owes a considerable part of its pathos to Timon's stripping himself outside the walls of Athens and proclaiming "Nothing I'll bear from thee / But nakedness, thou detestable town" (12.32-3). In text as well as in performance, *Timon of Athens* can be more radical if henceforth Timon remains in the same state of almost complete nakedness.[9] The utter abasement of his unclothed body also reinforces the play's parallels to *King Lear*, in particular to Lear's philosophizing on the "poor bare forked animal" than man is.

Although the Shakespearean Timon does not stoop to slavish agricultural labor, his digging in the forest is no less exhausting. He hardly ceases to dig throughout the second half of the play but seems to find very little to eat. The wilderness keeps Timon underfed just as Mammon's realm deprives Guyon of food, drink, and sleep. There is a note of urgency in Timon's unceremonious demand "Earth, yield me roots" (4.3.23). Yet at the same time Timon loathes the idea of having a healthy appetite. He feels that his melancholy disappointment in humanity should be attended by a distaste for nourishment — both because melancholy is no friend to appetite in general and because his meals of old were a social activity that he now prefers to forget. Society has forever tainted all food for Timon. If throughout the play "eating is a figure for relationship," then the misanthropic abolition of all relationships must also do away with eating.[10] To dull the hunger instinct, however, proves difficult, and Timon is frustrated with his human, all-too human nature: "That nature, being sick of man's unkindness, / Should yet be hungry!" (4.3.176-77). His misanthropic food disorder causes him to sway between, on the one hand, a feverish search for the poorest edible growth of the forest soil and, on the other hand, a resolution to mortify his stomach and become indifferent to food. What Timon dictates to his own hungering body he then uses as a universal moral lesson to be impressed also on his unwanted visitors. The bandits, for instance, he exhorts thus:

> Your greatest want is, you want much of meat.
> Why should you want? Behold the earth hath roots.
> Within this mile break forth a hundred springs.
> The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips.
> The bounteous housewife nature on each bush

[9] An aging G. Wilson Knight, for example, who greatly admired Timon and his play, performed the part in the 1940s almost naked.

[10] Ralph Berry, quoted in Jowett (192).

Lays her full mess before you. Want? Why want? (4.3.409-14)

The three men are quite obviously thieves who have come for the gold, but they seek it with hunger and neediness as their excuse: "We are not thieves, but men that much do want" (4.3.408). For Timon, however, their want — being excessive and fastidious — accuses rather than excuses them. The thieves' counter — "We cannot live on grass, on berries, water, / As beasts and birds and fishes" (4.3.415-16) — inflames Timon even more, and he denounces them as cannibals: "Nor [can you live] on the beasts themselves, the birds and fishes; / You must eat men" (4.3.417-18). Already at an earlier point, Timon has uttered provisional curses against those who would disagree with him on matters of diet. In particular, he has called upon the earth to punish gluttons who refuse to be satisfied with its raw roots: "Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate / With thy most operant poison" (4.3.24-25). Timon envisions a revenge in which the earth strikes back at its agricultural tormentors.

As a reaction against his former lavish life, in the wilderness Timon develops a distinctive subsistence-level ethic. In some of its formulations, this ethic appears to convey a positive message: it calls for restraint, modesty, moderation, and an appreciation for earth as the mother of all. The above speech before the thieves may criticize greed but, more importantly, it offers a constructive paradigm of a life in accordance with nature — so constructive in fact that Shakespeare may have borrowed it directly from Guyon's sermon before Mammon:

> Indeed (quoth he) through fowle intemperaunce,
> Frayle men are oft captiu'd to couetise:
> But would they thinke, with how small allowaunce
> Vntroubled Nature doth her selfe suffise,
> Such superfluities they would despise [...] (vii.15)

Yet at other times Timon's subsistence principles begin to sound like a nihilist program for starving himself, and his moderation proves to be the mask of a radical abstinence that, coupled with his self-hate, seeks his destruction. Indeed, even the positive line of his preaching, in which he promotes the untilled earth as a sufficient source of mankind's sustenance, takes on a suspect ring since in some of his oaths Timon has wished for the earth to become completely barren: "Ensear thy fertile and conceptuous womb" (14.187). Timon's idea of moderation — dietary and otherwise — seems dangerously immoderate. Apemantus says this much in a curious exchange during which he and Timon inquire about each other's wellbeing in a tone of mock solicitousness:

APEMANTUS.	Where liest a-nights, Timon?
TIMON.	Under what's above me. Where feed'st thou a-days, Apemantus?
APEMANTUS.	Where my stomach finds meat; or rather, where I eat it.
TIMON.	Would poison were obedient, and knew my mind!
APEMANTUS.	Where wouldst thou send it?
TIMON.	To sauce thy dishes.
APEMANTUS.	The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends. (4.3.293-301)

As John Jowett points out, it is striking that "the reference to moderation and extremes of experience and behavior develops from the discussion of eating, and so might allude to the digestive tract: the 'middle' is the nurturing stomach, hence the 'extremity of both ends' the consuming mouth and the defecating anus" (289 n.).

The negative, life-threatening effects of excessive moderation become a central issue also in the Legend of Temperance. Spenser works out the problems created by his titular virtue through allegorical visions of the digestive system and through the drama of Guyon's near death from food deprivation. Book II begins with an Aristotelian emphasis on temperance as the virtue that oversees the senses of touch and taste and regulates what the body, cued by them, absorbs from the evironment to satisfy its nutritional and sexual needs (see Aristotle, 1118a-b). Two episodes at the opening of Book II follow this dual conception of temperance from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: the erotic aberration of the knight Mordant with Spenser's Circe-figure Acrasia, who seduces and then poisons him (i) and a rich banquet attended by foul gluttons and perverse fasters (ii). With the banquet scene, Spenser pays homage to yet another crucial Nicomachean conception, namely that each virtue, including temperance, can be defined as a desirable mean between two specific passions, one of excess and one of deficiency (Aristotle, 1106b-1109b). At the feast in the house of Medina, temperance dictates that one should eat neither too much, as the greedy Perissa does (ii.36), nor, like the squeamish and overly abstemious Elissa, too little (ii.35), but rather, like Medina, a moderate amount calculated as the golden mean (cf. Apemantus' "middle of humanity") between these extremes (ii.38).

Later on in the Legend of Temperance, Medina's paradigm of virtue as an arithmetic problem is superseded by the architectonic ideal of Alma's castle, the allegory of the healthy human body. Alma's lesson to Guyon is that virtue inheres in the capacity of the body for self-regulation in accordance with its nature, needs, and teleology. As her name's possible derivation from Latin *alere*, to nourish, suggests, Alma reigns over a domain sustained by the intake of suitable matter from the surrounding world. Accordingly, at the center of this castle-organism lies the digestive system. As a castle begins at the gate, where it is decided who will be let in and who not, so does the body begin at the mouth, the body's careful selector of useful substances; and as a castle has its sewers, so does an organism have its way of expelling waste. Guyon's instructional tour of Alma's realm leaves no place for squeamishness as it takes him from the armored teeth all the way to the place of excretion, discreetly named Port Esquiline (ix.32). Even the latter contributes to the functional beauty of the body conceived of as an autarchic and entelechic entity. In thus bringing physiology to bear on ethics, Book II presents temperance as the achievement of an organism that possesses its own prudence and dignity.

Apart from regulating the body's diet, Spenserian temperance works in numerous other ways not covered by its Aristotelian definition. While in the *Nicomachean Ethics* temperance fights above all gluttony and concupiscence, in *The Faerie Queene* it busies itself also with wrath (Furor), excessive mirth (Phaedria), boastfulness (Braggadocchio), and last but not least, avarice. The encounter with Avarice in the person of Mammon comes at a fraught moment during Guyon's quest: the knight of temperance has just been separated from his companion the Palmer, who embodies

right reason.[11] The separation seems to impair Guyon's capacity for the kind of knowledge and reasoning that constitute the intellect's contribution to moral action.[12] Faced with Mammon's persuasiveness, Guyon allows that his own understanding of the charismatic nature of gold and its uses may be incomplete and that, to be able to defend his rejection of Mammon's offers, he should know more about the whence and the how of gold, that is, about its etiology. After all, Guyon must ensure that he does not owe his temperance to ignorance, or else he would fall short of the high ethical standards of *The Faerie Queene*, where moral virtue is not merely an unreflective habit to do good but rather a conscious disposition to do so for the right reasons.

To gain knowledge of "whence all the wealth late shewd [to him]/ Proceeded" (vii.38), Guyon is led by Mammon through endless subterranean interiors that uncannily resemble the vast hollows of the body allegorized as Alma's Castle.[13] The middle section of the castle — the stomach — is rendered as a monumental kitchen:

> It was a vaut ybuilt for great dispence,
> With many raunges reard along the wall;
> And one great chimney, whose long tonnel thence,
> The smoke forth threw. And in the midst of all
> There placed was a caudron wide and tall,
> Vpon a mighty furnace, burning whot,
> More whot, then Aetn', or flaming Mongiball:
> For day and night it brent, ne ceased not,
> So long as any thing it in the caudron got. (ix.29)

An equally burning atmosphere rages in the heart of Mammon's underworld where gold ore is smelted: "Therein an hundred raunges weren pight, / And hundred fornaces all burning bright" (vii.35). In the same appliances and vessels in which Alma's servants process food, Mammon's fiends process gold. In both places, the toiling and sweating workers use gigantic bellows and a series of laborious procedures to control the appliances and the temperature of the liquids: they stir with big ladles, hooks, and tongs, and they scum the foam and dross (compare vii.36 and ix.30).[14]

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[11] On the Aristotelian origin of the Palmer's allegorical identification, see Sirluck (79 and context).

[12] This is yet another Aristotelian tenet that is fundamental to the conception of how moral virtue operates throughout *The Faerie Queene*. For Aristotle, moral virtue is a disposition to like doing what is morally right and to dislike doing what is morally wrong. But moral virtue cannot in itself reason about what is right and what is wrong — this is the task of prudence (also called practical wisdom), which is more properly a virtue of the mind rather than of the moral character. Prudence thus cooperates with the moral virtues so that they can perform their task in a conscious, knowing, and informed manner.

[13] Noticed by Berger (73).

[14] As Read (74-78) argues, the physical setting and the procedures used by the fiends in this central part of Mammon's underworld allude to the gold mining and smelting industry that burgeoned in sixteenth-century Spanish America. The environmental conditions and the intensity of labor in the tunnels and the refineries were often described as nightmarish by observers, especially during the earlier period of establishing the industry before rationalization and technical innovation stepped in. Like Mammon's fiends, the (mostly native American) workers did "swincke [... and] sweat" and often died of exhaustion and food deprivation, two afflictions that vex Guyon, too. As so often in *The Faerie Queene*, the moral allegory incorporates relevant historical and social realities. And as

The numerous verbal echoes between the two passages give the impression that in the Castle of Alma Spenser rewrites the realm of Mammon. The similarities between the human body's interior and the entrails of the earth — where gold is said to 'grow' and where Mammon has also set up his smelting factory and treasury — prepare us for Spenser's moralized equivalence between the appetite for food and the appetite for riches, and between possessing and ingesting. This equivalence will haunt Guyon throughout his passage of the underworld and will eventually lead to his death-like swoon from having spent three days without food, drink, and sleep. Already in the original confrontation between the knight and the god of riches, the latter has prefigured the ability of inorganic gold to insinuate itself into organic life: "Thou," Mammon enjoins Guyon, "must [...] life for gold engage" (vii.18).

Guyon's starvation during his underground journey is partly predicated on the mythical "fatall Stygian lawes" (vii.27), which stipulate that a visitor to the underworld should never lay "couetous hand, or lustfull eye, / Or lips [...] on thing, that likt him best" or else he will forfeit his life (vii.27). These multiple prohibitions call to mind the myth of Persephone's abduction by Hades, told for example in Book 5 of *The Metamorphoses*. The Parcae decreed that Persephone would be released if for a certain period of time she abstained from any food in the underworld. Yet she strayed into a garden, plucked a pomegranate, ate seven of its seeds, and in this way sealed her own fate. By analogy, to earn his safety in Mammon's realm, Guyon must suppress his natural hunger.

Their last stop, appropriately, is the garden of Persephone, or Proserpina, where Mammon bids the knight eat of its fruit. With Guyon's refusal, Christian allusions begin to overlay the pagan myth. Jesus' first temptation, food, becomes Guyon's last. But what Christ — with his half-divine essence and with his promised guard of numerous angels — can easily resist should give Guyon a pause. For Guyon's merely human nature, a denial of all nourishment would amount to a gratuitous self-destruction. Moreover, Jesus is afforded much more agency in this temptation. Because Jesus has previously provided food for others by miraculous means, Satan phrases the temptation as a challenge for Jesus to feed himself by turning stones into bread. In Guyon's case, by contrast, it is the tempter Mammon who provides the meal, which leaves Guyon entirely at his mercy and puts in doubt the wholesomeness of the food. The garden's golden apples look exquisite, yet their flesh is but indigestible metal. They are the equivalent of stones that have been turned into bread only halfway, only in appearance, as though in mockery of the miracle that Satan proposes to Jesus. Or perhaps one must imagine a transformation in the opposite direction: what was once fruit proper has been given the Midas touch. Whatever its genesis, the fruit is

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far as the realities of gold mining are concerned, the lack of "vittles" (Read 69) looms as one of the most serious problems that accompanied European ventures in the Americas. Not only the mining laborers but also the conquistadores often starved to the point of compromising their human dignity in the name of their restless ambition to find more and more gold deposits. Read (69-71) quotes several nightmarish accounts in which European explorers, like Guyon, risked dying of food deprivation, neglecting to satisfy their natural physical hunger while being obsessed with an immoral hunger for gold. According to Read, Guyon may well be an "anti-conquistador" (81) rather than a gold-seeking conquistador; nonetheless, these parallels between him and New World explorers are striking.

inedible and Mammon's offer distasteful. Guyon might well give the same reason for rebuffing it as Timon gives in rejecting Alcibiades' small but compassionate gift of gold: "Keep it. I cannot eat it" (4.3.100).

It is the sensation of a deep distaste, combined with moral disgust, that puts Guyon on his guard and in the end causes him to refuse the infernal meal. Fortunately for Guyon, his stomach has its visceral wisdom, and Mammon's underworld hides some unappetizing sights close to the Garden of Proserpina. True to his role as a meticulous observer during his passage through Mammon's realm, Guyon is not content with merely marveling at the golden apples but proceeds to inspect the whole tree on which they grow. The same curiosity that provoked him to undertake this dangerous journey now saves him. He notices that

> [The tree's] broad braunches, laden with rich fee,
> Did stretch themselues without the utmost bound
> Of this great gardin, compast with a mound,
> Which ouer-hanging, they themselues did steepe,
> In a black flood which flow'd about it round;
> That is the riuer of Cocytus deepe,
> In which full many soules do endlesse wayle and weepe.
>
> Which to behold, he clomb vp to the bancke,
> And looking downe, saw many damned wightes,
> In those sad waues, which direfull deadly stancke,
> Plonged continually of cruell Sprightes [...] (vii.56-57)

The effort that Guyon makes to climb up and look more carefully at the Cocytus scenery will prove to be worthwhile, even though — or perhaps precisely because — Mammon has not invited him there. Cocytus begins by offending Guyon's nose with its "direfull deadly" stench. Next, the sight of its tortured souls — some tortured with food deprivation — checks any appetite that Gyon's three-day fast could have caused. Tantalus, the first victim whom Guyon beholds, is condemned to perpetual hunger and thirst that are never relived but only exacerbated by the repeated withdrawal of food and drink from his reach. The food on which he is fixated happens to be the golden fruit from the branches that overhang and steep themselves in the malodorous water of Cocytus. The drink Tantalus thirsts for is that same disgusting water in which, a little further down the stream, Pilate is desperately trying to wash the blood from his "handes most filthy feculent" (vii.61). Although Tantalus knows the hopelessness of his own case, he begs Guyon to give him some of the fruit and water, yet the knight declines to help the wretch: "Nay, nay, thou greedy Tantalus (quoth he) / Abide the fortune of thy present fate" (vii.60). Like *Timon of Athens*, the Legend of Temperance suggests that, at its worst, the greed for gold and food can make a man murderous, even cannibalistic. Ancient myth brands Tantalus as the slaughterer and cook of his own son, whose flesh he served at a banquet honored by the attendance of Jove himself. Tantalus' reputation cannot but pollute any food that is associated with him, including the golden fruit that he craves in Spenser's version of his punishment. If the fruit is the object of greedy Tantalus' desire, it cannot be suitable for the temperate knight. Watching Tantalus' manic attempts to lap the vile water and pluck the golden

fruit helps Guyon in his decision to refrain from consuming anything that is on offer in Mammon's underworld. Starvation is Guyon's ordeal undertaken in the name of temperance just as it is Tantalus' punishment for failing in the same virtue.

Noticing how much the scene in the Cocytus river has affected Guyon, Mammon "roughly" interrupts the knight's observation and tries to direct his attention back to the fruit: "Thou fearfull foole / Why takest thou not of that same fruite of gold, / Ne sittest downe on that same siluer stoole, / To rest thy weary person, in the shadow coole" (vii.63). In Mammon's last attempt to break Guyon's resistance, food is coupled with sleep. This coupling derives from an influential Aristotelian thesis that, as Garrett Sullivan notes (34), was "seconded throughout Renaissance natural philosophy" — namely, that "the nutritive part does its own work better when the animal [or living being] is asleep than when it is awake. Nutrition and growth are then especially promoted." Ever since Guyon's first refusal of Mammon's gold, Mammon's strategy has consisted in offering things that appear to be part and parcel of the normal functioning of an organism, and which it is usually reasonable and necessary to accept. Yet in Mammon's hands nothing can be safe from the taint of gold. The golden apples, in particular, literalize in an unpalatable way the Marxist dictum that everything is convertible into coin: the apples have become the cold metal that can buy them. Throughout the Mammon canto Spenser deals not only with the moral and economic evils that gold breeds but also with the capacity of gold to interfere even with physiology and life on a most fundamental level.[15] Gold is itself quite lively or, as Timon puts it, "quick" (4.3.45). Timon cannot put the lively metal to rest and interrupt its infernal machinations even by burying it, so in the end he decides that it is time to bury himself. For Guyon too, only a deathly exhaustion ending in his famous swoon can put a stop to Mammon's creative and vivacious temptations. Guyon triumphs over Mammon by letting himself grow so weak as to be unable to respond to any further offers. Guyon and Timon may appear to be immoderate in carrying their abstinence to the point of forbearing existence, yet such immoderation is their only way to avoid being enslaved by gold and dying a far more contemptible death: the death of "worldlings" (as Mammon calls his worshippers). For this reason, the accusation raised by Apemantus that the starving misanthrope cannot grasp "the middle of humanity" (4.3.300) and the unsympathetic view, so common in the critical tradition on Book II, that the starving Guyon betrays his ideal of temperance must both be taken with a grain of salt.

In anticipation of his end, Timon mentions water and the beach as his preferred burial place, so readers sometimes jump to the conclusion that Timon must have drowned himself. Yet the text does not corroborate this, nor do any of Shakespeare's sources that refer to a seashore grave. Perhaps rather than drowning, Shakespeare's Timon wastes away from misanthropic self-neglect and dies of malnourishment. In a Shakespearean context, the starving death is no mean business. Cleopatra, the queen of suicide herself, threatens this much when captured by Ceasar's soldiers: "Sir, I will eat no meat; I'll not drink , sir [...] This mortal house I'll ruin, / Do Caesar what he can"

[15] On gold's demonic capacity to invade everything rhetorically and physically, see David Landreth's analysis of the Mammon canto, especially 66-67.

(*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.48-51). Yet if Cleopatra had died in this way, she would have made it a glamorous death. Timon's death, by contrast, is frequently perceived as too withdrawn and underwhelming, without the violence and fanfare that should mark the exit of tragic protagonists from life and the stage. At the same time, as in Cleopatra's case, a strong ethical voluntarism emanates from Timon's death, in defiance of gold and its coercive system of uniformity and universal equivalence. When Timon found the forest treasure, Fortune's wheel made for him a complete turn back to its original auspicious position, which contradicts the normal *de casibus* script. Timon had everything he needed to restore himself to happiness and comfort. His fate depended entirely on him, which is an unprecedented situation at the end of a Shakespearean tragedy. Yet Timon decided to remain a wretch in the wilderness and hunger his life away. His will turned a greasy bulimic city play into an anorexic manifesto.

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Zusammenfassung

Die Szenen im zweiten Teil von *Timon of Athens*, die den Goldschatz betreffen, nehmen deutliche Anleihen bei *The Faerie Queene* II.vii, dem Canto in dem Spensers *knight of temperance,* Sir Guyon, den Gott Mammon trifft. Neben ihrer geteilten Verachtung für Gold unterziehen sich sowohl Timon und Guyon einer absichtlichen und extremen Hungerkur. Dieses Hungern ist besonders zentral in *Timon of Athens*, dessen erste Hälfte als bulimisch bezeichnet werden könnte, aber charakterisiert ebenso Spensers *Legend of Temperance,* die das Problem der hedonistischen Extreme während eines Festessens im *House of Medina* verhandelt und schließlich in einer Allegorie des reibungslos verdauenden menschlichen Körpers im *House of Alma* auflöst. Timon und Guyon müssen jegliche Nahrung zurückweisen, um auf existentielle Weise gegen Gold protestieren zu können – eine schwierige Aufgabe, die von Paradoxien und ironischen Wendungen gezeichnet ist. Mammon schlägt vor, Guyons Integrität zu prüfen, indem er ihn mit allen Reizen des Goldes in Mammons Unterwelt konfrontiert. Doch Mammon manipuliert Guyons Prüfung derart, dass die Zurückweisung von Gold der Zurückweisung von Schlaf, Trank und Speise gleichkommt. In ähnlicher Weise kehren Gold und Reichtum zu Timon zurück, nachdem er sich von allem außer dem absolutem Überlebensminimum an Nahrung losgesagt hat. Als Parallele zu Guyons Abstinenz entwickelt Timon eine Ethik der Bescheidenheit und dankbaren Akzeptanz von Nahrung, die die Natur frei zur Verfügung stellt. Doch letzlich erweist sich diese bescheidene Haltung als ungeeignete Verteidigung gegen Gold, vor dem sich sowohl Guyon als auch Timon nur um den Preis ihres Lebens retten können.

abstract

The gold treasure scenes in the second half of *Timon of Athens* owe much to *The Faerie Queene* II.vii, the canto in which Spenser's knight of temperance, Sir Guyon, encounters the god of riches Mammon. Apart from their contempt for gold, Timon and Guyon share the same experience of voluntary hunger endured to the point of starvation. Such self-starvation is particularly striking in *Timon of Athens*, a near-bulimic play in its first half, although it is no less significant in the Legend of Temperance, which introduces the problem of hedonistic extremes during a feast in the House of Medina and resolves it in an allegory of the perfectly digesting human body

in the House of Alma. Timon and Guyon must refuse all sustaining care of their bodies in order to raise an absolute existential protest against gold — a difficult mission fraught with paradoxes and ironies. Mammon proposes to test Guyon's integrity through a complete exposure to all the vaunted charms of gold in Mammon's underworld. Mammon manipulates Guyon's ordeal in such a way that the rejection of gold becomes equivalent to the necessity of rejecting sleep, drink, and food. Similarly, in the woods gold returns to Timon just when he has renounced everything in life but the bare minimum of nourishment. As a parallel to Guyon's temperance, Timon develops a dietary ethic of modesty and thankful acceptance of the nourishment that nature gives to man freely as opposed to what agriculture can force from her. Yet ultimately this moderate position proves to be an inadequate defense against gold, from which Guyon and Timon save themselves only by forbearing existence.

CALL FOR STATEMENTS – *SHAKESPEARE-SEMINAR* 2014

Strike up, pipers.
Shakespeare's Festivities

As we celebrate Shakespeare's 450th birthday we turn to merriment and commemoration in Shakespeare's plays. There is reason to believe that Shakespeare, if he were still alive, would shun the festivities in his honour. Shakespeare, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, never contributed to the royal entries or city pageants in his lifetime. We also know that Shakespeare's festive comedies cast doubt upon what is being celebrated and by whom. Equally, it is often the wreath of victory or the lascivious pleasing of a lutethat foreshadows a crisis. Without ignoring the fact that there is a place for merriment and festivity in Shakespeare's oeuvre, we would like to investigate why and how celebration goes awry in so many of his plays. That investigation allows for revisiting, among other issues, notions of genre, the place of rhetoric, as well as constraints of production. Are Shakespeare's feasts tapered by the amalgamation of religious, political and economic constraints? And how far does the historical context influence our reading of these feasts? Is the "feast of Crispian" a feast? Can it survive as a legacy stripped from the commemoration of Marian martyrs and resonances with the nursery rhyme "Remember, remember, the fifth of November"? Identifying merriment and commemoration as ritual, and addressing the cultural and textual forces at play, this workshop aims at a closer understanding of why Shakespeare arguably sympathised with Mistress Page in preferring to "go home, and laugh this sport o'er by a country fire".

Our seminar plans to address these and related questions with a panel of six papers during the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, *Shakespeare-Tage* (24-27 April 2014 in Weimar, Germany). As critical input for the discussion and provocation for debate, panellists are invited to give short statements on the basis of pre-circulated papers presenting concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) and all further questions by **15 November 2013** to the seminar convenors:

Felix Sprang, University of Hamburg: felix.sprang@uni-hamburg.de
Christina Wald, Humboldt University of Berlin: christina.wald@hu-berlin.de

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